



TONTO NATIONAL FOREST

# NEWS RELEASE

*Tonto National Forest, 2324 East McDowell Road, Phoenix, Arizona 85006* <http://www.fs.usda.gov/tonto>

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**For Immediate Release  
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**Contact: Don Dixon  
480-610-3336**

## **Tonto National Forest offers guided desert walks on Tuesdays**

Mesa, Ariz. (November 8, 2011). Weekly "Desert Walks," featuring plants and wildlife on the Salt River, will begin on November 15. There is no charge for this activity which is offered by the Mesa Ranger District Volunteer Program.

The walks will be held every Tuesday at 10 a.m., alternating between two meeting locations: the Pebble Beach walks for odd Tuesdays of the month, and the PhonD Sutton location scheduled for meeting on even Tuesday dates.

Aimee Beth Ward, an educator who has been leading groups into the desert for over 20 years, is the program coordinator. Ward is a master gardener who has devoted her life to learning about the desert and sharing it with others. She comments, "My passion is to help people see and enjoy the desert in a new way by creating connections with our animal neighbors and natural environment."

The walks are on easy terrain and usually last about an hour and a half. Sun protection and comfortable walking shoes are advised, as well as a walking stick if desired.

"We are pleased to be able to offer this service to the community," said acting district ranger Rocky Gilbert. "There are lots of interesting and unique things about the desert and this offers residents and visitors a chance to learn about some of these."

Additional information on the program can be found online at [www.mrdvolunteers.org](http://www.mrdvolunteers.org).

Community groups interested in requesting an alternate group walk or talk led by Ward should contact her at 509-312-9074.